

Appl. No. : 10/072,539
Filed : February 8, 2002

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid, comprising the steps of:

providing an intraductal fluid sampling device having an adjustable support, at least one inflatable bladder carried by the support and a patient interface surface carried by the bladder;

adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested wherein the support comprises at least 3 petals, and the adjusting step comprises pivotally adjusting the petals to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression;

placing the interface in contact with the breast;

inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast; and

noninvasively obtaining the intraductal fluid sample.

2. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step is carried out before the placing the interface in contact with the breast step.

3. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the placing the interface in contact with the breast step is carried out prior to the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step.

4. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the adjusting step comprises adjusting the support to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression.

5. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 3, wherein the adjusting step comprises rotating an adjustment ring.

6. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the placing step comprises placing the interface surface in contact with the breast such that at least a portion of the bladder is positioned to impart compression to the lactiferous sinus.

7. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the lactiferous sinus.

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8. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the breast at least partially on the anatomically proximal aspect to the lactiferous sinus.

9. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder with a heated fluid.

10. (Previously Amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 9, wherein the heated fluid is heated to a temperature within the range of from about 102° F to about 120° F.

11. (Original) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 1, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 1 second to about 30 seconds.

12. (Previously Amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 11, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 5 seconds to about 20 seconds.

13. (Previously Amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 11, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 3 cycles per minute to about 60 cycles per minute.

14. (Previously Amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 13, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 4 cycles per minute to about 20 cycles per minute.

15. (Previously Amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 13, wherein the inflation cycles are controlled by a control circuit.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid, comprising the steps of:

providing an intraductal fluid sampling device having an adjustable support, at least one inflatable bladder carried by the support and a patient interface surface carried by the bladder;

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adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested wherein the support comprises at least 3 petals, and the adjusting step comprises pivotally adjusting the petals to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression;

placing the interface in contact with the breast prior to the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step, wherein the adjusting step comprises rotating an adjustment ring; and

inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast;

whereby a sample of intraductal fluid is obtained.

18. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 17, wherein the adjusting step comprises adjusting the support to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression.

19. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 17, wherein the placing step comprises placing the interface surface in contact with the breast such that at least a portion of the bladder is positioned to impart compression to the lactiferous sinus.

20. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 17, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the lactiferous sinus.

21. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 17, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the breast at least partially on the anatomically proximal aspect to the lactiferous sinus.

22. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 17, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder with a heated fluid.

23. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 22, wherein the heated fluid is heated to a temperature within the range of from about 102° F to about 120° F.

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24. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 17, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 1 second to about 30 seconds.

25. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 24, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 5 seconds to about 20 seconds.

26. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 24, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 3 cycles per minute to about 60 cycles per minute.

27. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 26, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 4 cycles per minute to about 20 cycles per minute.

28. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 24, wherein the inflation cycles are controlled by a control circuit.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently amended) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid, comprising the steps of:

providing an intraductal fluid sampling device having an adjustable support, at least one inflatable bladder carried by the support and a patient interface surface carried by the bladder;

adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested wherein the support comprises at least 3 petals, and the adjusting step comprises pivotally adjusting the petals to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression;

placing the interface in contact with the breast; and

inflating the bladder with a heated fluid to provide compression to the breast;

whereby a sample of intraductal fluid is obtained.

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31. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step is carried out before the placing the interface in contact with the breast step.

32. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the placing the interface in contact with the breast step is carried out prior to the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step.

33. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the adjusting step comprises adjusting the support to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression.

34. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the adjusting step comprises rotating an adjustment ring.

35. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the placing step comprises placing the interface surface in contact with the breast such that at least a portion of the bladder is positioned to impart compression to the lactiferous sinus.

36. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the lactiferous sinus.

37. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the breast at least partially on the anatomically proximal aspect to the lactiferous sinus.

38. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the heated fluid is heated to a temperature within the range of from about 102° F to about 120° F.

39. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 30, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 1 second to about 30 seconds.

40. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 39, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 5 seconds to about 20 seconds.

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41. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 39, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 3 cycles per minute to about 60 cycles per minute.

42. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 39, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 4 cycles per minute to about 20 cycles per minute.

43. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 41, wherein the inflation cycles are controlled by a control circuit.

44. (Cancelled)

45. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid, comprising the steps of:

providing an intraductal fluid sampling device having an adjustable support, at least one inflatable bladder carried by the support and a patient interface surface carried by the bladder;

adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested;

placing the interface in contact with the breast; and

inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast;

wherein the support comprises at least 3 petals, and the adjusting step comprises pivotally adjusting the petals to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression;

whereby a sample of intraductal fluid is obtained.

46. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step is carried out before the placing the interface in contact with the breast step.

47. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the placing the interface in contact with the breast step is carried out prior to the adjusting the support to correspond with the approximate size of a breast to be tested step.

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48. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the adjusting step comprises adjusting the support to approximately fit the breast without imparting compression.

49. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the adjusting step comprises rotating an adjustment ring.

50. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the placing step comprises placing the interface surface in contact with the breast such that at least a portion of the bladder is positioned to impart compression to the lactiferous sinus.

51. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the lactiferous sinus.

52. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the inflating the bladder to provide compression to the breast step comprises providing compression to the breast at least partially on the anatomically proximal aspect to the lactiferous sinus.

53. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder with a heated fluid.

54. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 53, wherein the heated fluid is heated to a temperature within the range of from about 102° F to about 120° F.

55. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 45, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 1 second to about 30 seconds.

56. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 55, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder for an inflation cycle having a duration within the range of from about 5 seconds to about 20 seconds.

57. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 55, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series

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of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 3 cycles per minute to about 60 cycles per minute.

58. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 57, wherein the inflating the bladder step comprises inflating the bladder through a series of cycles at a repetition rate within the range of from about 4 cycles per minute to about 20 cycles per minute.

59. (Previously added) A method of obtaining a sample of intraductal fluid as in Claim 57, wherein the inflation cycles are controlled by a control circuit.